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ERNST MACH, IN CONGRATULATION ON HIS  
SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

AMONG our contemporary scientists there are few, if any, who have attained an importance which would equal that of Professor Mach, and we here take the liberty to congratulate him publicly upon his seventieth birthday, which he will celebrate on the 18th of February, 1908. Professor Mach is not only a man of distinction in his specialty: he has not only all the usual honors of the government heaped upon his head, for instance a membership in the house of lords of the Austrian empire, but he has also become known as a model in his personal attitude. Success and fame have not spoiled him. He has preserved an unaffected simplicity, we may say modesty, which is only found in truly great men, never in men of talent who excel rather by brilliancy than by thoroughness.

It has become customary to celebrate the seventieth birthday of famous men, but Professor Mach has stopped all these efforts, and has refused to accept delegations and similar honors that should officially be offered him by his friends and admirers. He knows that on such occasions people are sometimes forced into participation against their own wishes, and he would prefer to have recognition come when all personal motives and regards of a social kind have been taken away,—which would only be when a man has passed out of life. We hope, however, that Professor Mach will pardon us for following our natural impulse

not to let the anniversary of his seventieth birthday pass by without at least mentioning the fact and saying that we think of him in grateful recognition of his merits for science, especially physics and the history of mechanics, and the philosophical interpretation of scientific research. We can do this with the greater impartiality as in spite of the many points of contact that exist between Professor Mach's philosophical attitude and our own, we have differences which for all we see are in some of their inferences of signal importance.

We had discussions with Professor Mach, but never were we confronted with a scholar with whom dispute was carried on in such an impersonal spirit, by simply offering explanations of the topics in question, as in his case. In fact his personality disappeared in his work, which may fairly well be characterized as an absolutely objective consideration of facts.

At any rate he gave the first impetus to seek the unity of his branch of inquiry with kindred ones and with all the others, so as to keep in mind the oneness of all of them and produce a world-conception consistent in itself and founded on the facts of experience.

At the time when Professor Mach was a young man, science was not only alienated from philosophy, but the different sciences, too, developed separately in isolation. That conditions have changed is to no little extent due to Professor Mach, who was one of the very first naturalists who ventured beyond the boundary of his specialty, and proposed to comprehend its place in the economy of the whole. Thus he became a philosopher and we may call his philosophy "the philosophy of science."

EDITOR.